

Teachers and the Realisation of Nigeria's French Language Agenda

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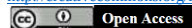
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ABSTRACT

The French language is strategically positioned in international relations, regionalism, and cultural one-on-one communication, especially in Africa where there is the convergence of lingo and policy factors. Nigeria is one of the many governments that have adopted French as part of their education systems in line with the bilingual agenda of the African Union as well as the global francophone project. Nevertheless, the achievement of this agenda does not require policy documents only but the teachers as effective agents of implementation. The paper considers the complex role of teachers in French language agenda, their roles as policy brokers, policy encouragers, cultural brokers, and pedagogical brokers. It also brings out the structural issues that teachers are experiencing including lack of training, resources, and policy-practice gaps. The study is informed by a qualitative approach based on document analysis and review of existing literature through thematic analysis. The results indicate that the effectiveness of teachers has a direct impact on the attitudes of learners, their performance in terms of proficiency and finally the sustainability of French language policies. The research concludes that until there is substantial investment in teacher capacity-building, resources, and ongoing professional development then the French language agenda will be aspirational as opposed to realised. Recommendations are made with regard to policy support, intercultural training, and creative pedagogy which can provide the teachers with the ability to play their key role in language planning.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is not just a communication tool; it is a cultural identity, social integration as well as political power. French language in a specific situation has a special place in the world linguistic hierarchy. With over 321 million speakers in the world, it is the fifth most spoken language and the third most popular foreign language (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie [OIF], 2022). In addition to its population prowess, French is a language of working of most international organisations such as the United Nations, African Union (AU) and the European Union. The French language is their diplomacy tool and a regional integrative tool in the case of African states particularly West Africa. Nigeria is an Anglophone nation, but has borders with Francophone nations like Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon thus teaching and learning French is a strategic national interest (Aka, 2023).

In order to address these geopolitical realities, Nigeria officially stated that French was its second official language in the year 1998 to supplement English as its main language of governance and education (Ogunmodede & Akinwale, 2021). This was not just a symbolic declaration but it was in line with the overall policy of the bilingualism of the Africa Union that aims at promoting both English and French as continental working languages. The Nigerian education policy was thus amended to incorporate French in secondary schools curriculum and in a few instances as a mandatory subject at junior levels (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019). Nevertheless, the implementation of this agenda is still not balanced after more than twenty years. Although the policy aims are high, the real results regarding the student level and wider usage are low (Ndille, 2021).

The educator is at the heart of this disillusionment of policy aspiration and classroom reality. Teachers are not just those who in passive manner transmit the curriculum but are active participants who interpret, modify and present the educational material in a manner that influences the experiences of learners. In French, teachers are the carriers of the agenda itself: they become the exemplars of language use, the policymakers, and the initiators of interaction with students (Adediji and Salami, 2022). They do not simply teach French but also have a cultural and political role as teaching French in Nigeria is not only a linguistic activity but also a transnational diplomacy.

1.2 A Conceptual Clarification of the French Language Agenda

The phrase French Language Agenda needs to be explained as it has several layers of the meaning. In a wide sense, it can be conceptualized in two dimensions. The first one is the national educational agenda that entails domestic policies that further the idea of using French in the school system to attain bilingualism and enhance intercultural competence. The second is the international Francophone agenda, led by La Francophonie and buttressed by France, which aims at preserving French as an international relevant and influential language in a multipolar world (OIF, 2022). In both respects, the agenda is highly political: it relates cultural diplomacy to educational practice.

In the case of Nigeria and other Anglophone African states the French language agenda is placed in the nexus of continental integration, regional cooperation and the construction of national identity. It is not only an indication of educational priorities but the foreign policy peculiar to Nigeria in relation to the countries of the Francophone world (Okeke, 2020). This means that the agenda cannot be shrunk to the contents of the curriculum; it is a broader socio-political initiative, teachers are just frontline workers.

1.3 Centrality of Teachers in Implementation of language policy

The teachers are central to the achievement of any language policy since they are the ones who interfere between abstract policy documents and concrete classroom practices. According to language policy theorists, teachers play a role as a kind of street-level bureaucrats and their daily actions define the destiny of educational reforms (Shohamy, 2019). Within the Nigerian context, the teachers of French language are able to convert national objectives into pedagogical actions, control limited resources and shape the attitudes of learners towards the language. Absent their contributions and effectiveness, the French language agenda will be just a dream.

Moreover, instructors are culture representatives. They do not only teach the grammar and the vocabulary of the French language, but also reveal them to the cultural norms, values, and literatures of the Francophone communities. It corresponds to the sociocultural theory of language acquisition, which focuses on the fact that learning a language is an enculturation process mediated by social interaction (Lantolf and Thorne, 2020). Therefore, teachers cannot just be the carriers of knowledge; they are translators of culture, identity and diplomacy.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

In the year 1998, the pronouncement of French as a second official language in Nigeria was envisaged as a strategic move to ensure regional integration, diplomatic collaboration as well as opening the economic avenue to a wider area in West Africa. Regardless of this policy orientation, the implementation of French language agenda has not been satisfactory. Over twenty years later, the number of students attending French classes in schools in Nigeria is still relatively low in comparison to English, which still remains the language of instruction, administration, and employment (Tchatchoua, 2021). In fact, even in places where French is being taught, the levels of student proficiency are usually very low and in many cases, learners are unable to exhibit communicative competence after years of teaching.

This gap is perpetuated by a variety of factors, which are linked to one another. To start with, there is inadequate teacher preparation and professional development. The French teachers in Nigeria do not get a chance to immerse themselves in the Francophone settings and most of them use traditional grammar-translation techniques that do not provide the students with communicative skills. Second, many schools lack appropriate teaching materials in the form of relevant textbooks, audio-visual materials and working language laboratories. Third, the students rarely get the exposure to real-life application of the French language outside the classroom setting, thus restricted to practice. Lastly, embedded within the society are beliefs that the French language is less economically, valuable than the English language is seen to be the universal language of science, business, and mobility.

Amongst these difficulties, the factor of teacher comes out as the most determining. Language policy goals are implemented in the classroom mainly by the teachers. Their effectiveness, teaching decisions and ability to motivate students can make the difference between students being interested in learning French and feeling that it does not have a meaning. The issue is not necessarily in ambitious structures of policies, but in the inadequate investment in the empowerment of teachers to implement the policies. Although the education policy of Nigeria lays emphasis on the role of French, exercising proper emphasis on teacher training, pedagogical innovation and classroom support systems has been wanting. Such a disjuncture demoralizes the larger objective of bilingualism in the country and limits Nigeria to the capability of becoming a full-fledged member of Francophone networks wherein the French language continues to dominate the communication process.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the role of teachers in the realisation of the French language agenda. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the specific roles teachers play as policy mediators, pedagogical innovators, motivators, and cultural ambassadors.
2. Analyse how teacher practices shape students' attitudes and proficiency in French.
3. Identify challenges limiting teachers' effectiveness in advancing the French language agenda.
4. Recommend strategies for strengthening the capacity of teachers to fulfil their roles effectively.

1.6 Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, the following research questions guide the study:

1. What are the roles of teachers in implementing the French language agenda?
2. How do teachers' practices influence learner outcomes in French language acquisition?
3. What challenges do teachers face in advancing the agenda?
4. What strategies can enhance teachers' contributions to the realisation of the French language agenda?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research is important because of a number of related reasons. To policymakers, it highlights the role of teachers in the realisation of the French language agenda to be effective. Language planning and bilingualism policies will be mere wishful thinking until enough investments are done on teacher training, professional development, and classroom support. The results thus act as a testimony to formulate the interventions that would match the policy agenda to the realities on the ground.

On the case of educational institutions, the paper raises the question of the need to develop sustainable structures to support continuous professional growth, mentoring, and access to contemporary teaching facilities. The insights can be applied to reinforce curriculum delivery, offer language laboratories, and support settings that support pedagogical innovation in institutions.

To educators, the study is a reflective tool on their professional tasks as it outlines that they play a central role as policy brokers, learning drivers, and agents of influence in culture. It also offers some strategies they can use to enhance classroom activities, involve learners better, and adjust to the conditions created by the lack of resources or the attitudes of the society.

Lastly, to scholars and researchers, the research adds to the current scholarly discussions on the connection between language policy, pedagogy and cultural diplomacy in Africa. It provides a context-specific study of Nigeria and also gives insights that can be transferred to other multilingual environments in the continent.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

This research is based on secondary information and sources. It involves no classroom observations, interviews, and surveys. Therefore, first-hand experiences of teachers and learners are not recorded. Results are the reflection of what the published authors and institutions found. Well-endowed schools and regions may be biased towards publication. Evidence of under-documented regions may not exist.

The review window is 2019-2025. Previous background research and extremely new developments can be omitted. Nigeria can change its policies quickly. Others that are not considered

include new curricula, funding or training after the review window. Nigeria is also a subject of the study. Caution should be taken when generalising to other Anglophone states.

The documents were predominantly in English. The relevant sources of French-only (or local language) might be under-represented. Thematic analysis aids in identifying a pattern, but not causation. The association between the practice of teachers and the outcomes is still reported.

The sources contain data on resources and ICT that are of differing depth. Other reports are generalized without details at school level. That constrains accuracy on work where. Lastly, the themes could be influenced by the selection decisions of what to include or not to include. A mixed research study including interviews, observations, and learning tests would decrease these limitations and enhance the assurance about the further working.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Teacher Role in Education

The success of any educational system is well known to be largely pegged on the teachers who are considered to be the second greatest influence after the learners in the success of a given system. They are placed in a central position due to the fact that they are engaged in the delivery of content beyond the basic delivery of content and they are involved in interpreting curriculum, classroom management, motivating learners and assessment. Teachers as Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) note are in a position to be the designers of learning environments and to determine not only what students know but how they come to know it, and what values they place upon it. They decide the lesson design, instructional pace, and the type of interactions that take place in classrooms. Such decisions define whether learners consider education a meaningful and empowering experience or a robotic and dispassionate one.

The teacher role in language education is even more complicated. Language learning does not merely mean the passing of information but rather acquiring communicative ability and socialising learners into new forms of thinking and communication. Larsen-Freeman (2020) suggests that teachers play the role of language models, cultural mediators and socialisation agents. It is assumed that they should be a model of proficiency and appropriate language usage, and they should give the learners a chance to practice communicating in real-life situations and understanding of other cultures. Language education does not come like other subjects that require constant interaction, exposure, and feedback. The teachers are thus physical representatives of the target language and their performance, language and style of communication and cultural literacy directly affect the students.

This task is especially challenging when it comes to the second or foreign language situations when students are not exposed to the target language outside of school. Teachers working in these environments need to be keen to strike a balance between teaching grammar and allowing learner practice communicatively and interculturally. When they are too grammar-oriented, the learners are likely to learn theoretical knowledge without achieving practical competence. By focusing on unstructured conversation they might not achieve the precision in communication demanded at the higher level. The best educators are those who can combine both of them and provide students with a multifaceted combination of linguistics knowledge, practice, and cultural background.

Systemic challenges also make it complicated how the role of the teacher can be in Africa and in Nigeria specifically. Resource limitations usually imply that educators should achieve ambitious language policy objectives in the classroom, which lacks textbooks, technological devices, or immersion opportunities (Ndille, 2021). French educators have to use old-fashioned materials or make their own sources since there is not enough official offer in most schools. Teachers also have to fill the demands of national policy without the advantage of a long period of professional development or experience of being immersed in Francophone situations. In spite of these limitations, their practices are categorical in the determination of attitudes and performance of learners. Students can develop the perception of French as something doable and beneficial with inspired and resourceful teaching staff or irrelevant and disconnected with the real world.

The French Language Agenda

The French language agenda is a broad term to which global, regional and national efforts are directed to promote the use of French as a diplomatic, science, educational, and cultural language. On the international scale, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF, 2022) has focused on

the following goals: increasing the presence of French speakers globally, promoting the teaching of French in non-French speaking nations and the need to ensure that French is among the working languages of key international organisations like the United Nations and the African Union. The agenda is a symbol of cultural diplomacy and soft power into which France and Francophone nations wish to maintain French as a prestige language in the world that is increasingly dominated by English.

In Africa, the agenda is highly associated with the collaboration in the region. African Union has severally emphasized on bilingualism, especially English-French as one of its methods of continental integration. Nigeria, and many other Anglophone states, consider French a key to diplomatic, trade and security relations with other Francophone states.

The agenda of French language in Nigeria has been more national in nature but has been attached to these continental trends. French became the second official language in Nigeria in 1998 with the aim of enhancing the diplomatic and economic relations of the country with other Francophone countries in the region (Ogunmodede & Akinwale, 2021). Education sector has been pointed out to be the most important place where this policy can be operationalised. The French language was incorporated in the curriculum of high schools and the teacher education courses were increased to be trained in French. Theoretically, these reforms were to guarantee generations of Nigerians becoming competent in French, therefore, facilitating the overall plan of bilingualism and regional integration.

However, there has been an unequal implementation of the agenda. According to Okeke (2020), French classes have had low student enrolment despite the policy framework, and the level of proficiency has been low. The French language is perceived by many learners as a forced subject with not much practical application as compared to English which is the most dominant in the life of the people and in the world at large. This discrepancy between high-reaching policies and low results once again leads to the conclusive purpose of teachers who stand between the practice and the ideals of policy.

Language Policy and Implementation.

Language policy: The term language policy is used to refer to official choices concerning the status, use and instruction of languages in a society (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997/2019). These policies may include making a language official, the language role in education, or the language promotion internationally. The effectiveness of such policies however relies on their application which mostly happens in schools. Shohamy (2019) proposes that policies cannot be imposed on teachers and learners as they are understood and implemented on a lower level. Policies thus are texts, which are not alive until they are brought to life in the classrooms.

Teachers, being the chief implementing agents, are what Ricento (2020) refers to as street-level implementers. They determine the manner of interpreting curricula, the methods to be applied and the manner in which the lessons can be adapted to the local setting. On the basis of their decisions, policy goals are either achieved or thwarted. Practically, even when the same language policy is used, the outcomes may be very different in terms of the way in which it is interpreted and implemented by the teachers.

In bilingual countries such as Nigeria, the issue is especially severe. English has preeminence in social life, academia and economic opportunities. A French language policy implementation therefore cannot be achieved by simply enforcing the language to be in the curriculums. It requires teacher loyalty, creative pedagogy and the regular involvement of the learners. The educators have to convince learners about the importance of French, encourage them to continue studying, and provide them with a chance to practice French in real-life situations where it is not commonly spoken.

This process cannot overestimate the role of a teacher. The French language agenda can only be a mere dream that is not realized without experienced, inspired, and properly supported teachers. Language policy collides with practice in their work and it is in their classrooms that we will find the future of bilingualism in Nigeria finally settled.

2.2 Empirical Review

Educators as if between Policies

According to recent studies, teachers always play a central role as an intermediary between language policy frameworks and the realities of the classrooms. Policies are designed at national or regional levels, and they are formulated with specific goals, e.g.: improving bilingualism, fostering communicative competence or cultural diplomacy but these goals are realized only after teachers take

them into action. As demonstrated by Adedeji and Salami (2022), Nigerian teachers of French often reformulate the requirements of the curriculum in the light of the available resources. As an example, in spite of the national curriculum emphasizing communicative competence, teachers tend to go back to grammatic-translation techniques. It is a pragmatic adaptation, as well as a structural constraint: the types of classroom in which there are no audio-visual resources or the ability to engage in immersion simply do not allow the communicative teaching in its most ideal form. These adaptations also demonstrate the agency of the teachers who have to negotiate high expectations of the policy with realistic limits.

The same tendencies can be found in other African settings. In a research on Cameroon, Tchatchoua (2021) identified that the language planning goals are often modified by a teacher to meet the realities in a community. The official policies tended to put the bilingualism and intercultural awareness at the forefront but the teachers occasionally overshadowed the lessons with rote learning of words and grammar due to the big classes and the necessity to prepare students to take tests. This disparity between the policy and practice highlights the interpretative authority of the teachers: they are not merely piping systems of rules but are decision-makers whose classroom practices determine the results of language planning.

Teachers as examples of language use

Teachers also play the role of leading the modeling of the French language where the exposure is minimal to the learners outside the school setting. Students in the Anglophone world like Nigeria seldom listen to French in terms of both publicity and media as well as in their daily lives. As a result, the teacher is the only constant presentation of the way French sounds and the way it is pronounced and the way it is used in social conduct. According to Ndille (2021), the motivation and ability of learners in non-Francophone Africa depend heavily on the fluency and the communicative style of a teacher. Students will be more willing to see the French language as easy and worthy of undertaking when teachers are comfortable using the language in real-life communications.

However, there are numerous teachers of French in Nigeria who have problems with oral fluency. According to Ogunmodede and Akinwale (2021), many teachers who have undergone training in French had competent theoretical knowledge but poorly developed spoken language. This drawback tends to lead to the situation when the classrooms are filled with translation tasks and mechanical trainings instead of active communication. Such programmes result in learners having little or no conversation skills that can diminish the credibility of the French language agenda. The outcome of this finding is that teachers must undergo continuous professional development and immersion opportunities so that they can serve as plausible linguistic role models. In the absence of this, policy objectives will be abstract.

Pedagogical Innovation and Integration of ICT

Teachers do not only do the modelling but they are also supposed to be innovators and make learning relevant and interesting. In language learning, pedagogical innovation is especially essential since it requires a long-term interest to be mastered. A study conducted by Aka (2023) on ICT integration in the West African French classes revealed that the use of audio-visual materials, online resources, and virtual interactions to create more engagement with the learners were observed to happen when teachers involved more audio-visual materials. As an illustration, exposure to French movies, YouTube videos, or Skype calls with their French counterparts have shown the students to be more motivated and oral competence has been established through their level of oral competence.

Nevertheless, the spread of such innovation is limited by the infrastructural barriers. Most of the schools do not have access to the internet, working projectors, and language laboratories. Mbah and Ajibola (2020) also noted that despite educators being trained in the communicative strategies, they tended to turn back to the traditional ones due to the lack of the resources to facilitate the interactive pedagogy in their school. These results indicate that although teachers are able to be innovators, their activities are mediated by the institutional conditions. To be successful, the French language agenda has to be supplemented by system-wide investment in technologies and resources.

Teachers as Teachers and as Cultural Ambassadors

Teachers as well as imparting knowledge are shape-givers of attitudes of the learners. They play a particularly important part as motivators in situations where the attitude towards French in society is mixed. In Nigeria, French has been viewed by many parents and students as economically inferior to

English that controls business, academia, and international relations. It is in this context that teachers should be keen to convince learners about the relevance of French.

Okeke (2020) discovered that students had higher chances of continuing to learn French when their teachers included some elements of culture like Francophone music, film or literature. These experiences preconditioned the French as an entry point to the exploration of culture and not a dull academic need. The strategy complies with sociocultural theories of learning, which emphasize that not only linguistic knowledge but cultural identity is mediated by the teacher (Lantolf and Thorne, 2020). Teachers also become representatives of cultural bridging by offering French as a way to open the world of opportunity and have a sense of belonging. This ambassadorial role adds to the pedagogical one of the teacher and makes him or her more of a diplomat and of intercultural negotiation.

Educational Dilemmas That Face Teachers.

Although these roles are central, teachers experience major challenges that compromise their functionality in meeting these various roles. The former is insufficient professional training and insufficient opportunities to develop continuously. Adedeji and Salami (2022) also said that a considerable number of teachers in Nigeria do not undertake immersion programmes in the Francophone countries, which prevents them from being fluent. The education programmes on teacher education also lean towards teaching theory rather than practice in communication, and they end up with graduates who are not ready to face the classroom.

The other difficulty is the lack of resources. According to Ndille (2021), a significant number of schools do not have the latest textbooks, audio recordings, and working laboratories, which compels educators to work with outdated techniques. Innovative pedagogy is hardly possible without the modern resources.

The third problem is associated with the views of the society. Ogunmodede and Akinwale (2021) have noted that English is generally considered the language of opportunity and mobility in the labour market of Nigeria, and French is looked at as a secondary language. This image discourages students and it becomes hard to keep up the teachers going.

And lastly is the problem of policy-practice gaps. As shown by Tchatchoua (2021), high-profile pronouncement of bilingualism in Cameroon was often not followed through in terms of funding or institutional provisions. This is similar with the Nigerian scenario, where adoption of the French language as the second official language has not been followed by enough budgetary allocations to develop teachers or classrooms. The work of teachers, therefore, is subject to environments that have high expectations much beyond the assistance that teachers are getting.

Implications for the French Language Agenda

The combination of these results creates a contradiction. Teachers are at the same time the biggest asset and the biggest challenge in the realisation of French language agenda. When the educators are good, motivated and equipped, the students portray even greater proficiency and positive attitudes. On the other hand, in situations where teachers are not fluent in their language, do not have resources and are not supported by institutions, the agenda is stalled. The resulting empirical literature all comes to one thing: sustainable language policy is reliant on teacher development.

Assuming that the agenda of French language should shift towards reality, the investment of teachers should become a keystone of the policy. This involves offering opportunities to immerse, provision of ongoing professional development, technological access, and forums of cultural interaction. The objectives of bilingualism and cultural integration are achievable only with the help of preparing teachers as mediators, models, innovators, motivators, and ambassadors. In a nutshell, the agenda can never be successful without the empowerment of individuals mandated to implement it in the classroom.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Theory of Language Policy and Planning

The language policy and planning (LPP) theory can be regarded as a holistic approach to the comprehension of the way of how decisions concerning the language status, the corpus, and the acquisition are made and carried out in societies. Status planning deals with the recognition of the languages to be recognised and in which areas to be used. Corpus planning deals with the formation of the language itself, e.g. unification of spelling, vocabulary, or grammar. The acquisition planning concentrates on the mechanisms of the acquisition and transmission of language, usually via the

education systems (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997/2019). In the case of French language agenda in Nigeria, the most crucial dimension is acquisition planning since it is through the school system where most of the learners are exposed to French.

Ricento (2020) highlights that there will be no success in planning an acquisition without taking into consideration the role of teachers, as the first line of policy implementation. Teachers read curricular structures, alter them to classroom realities and decide what pedagogical practices will influence student achievement. This observation explains why policies do not suffice by themselves: statements with regard to French as a second official language are metaphorical until teachers make them real-life classroom actions. In Nigeria, an example is the adoption of French as a second official language in 1998, which will be remained aspirational in cases of lack of resources, motivation and training of the teachers on how to apply the new policy effectively. The LPP theory thus explains that the success of language planning is not accidental but builds on the agency of teachers.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a shift in paradigm in language pedagogy, abandoning grammar rule-by-rote memorisation in favour of interactive meaning-oriented communication. On a deeper level, CLT regards language not merely as a rule system but as an instrument of communication in life. According to Larsen-Freeman (2020), reconsidering teachers as facilitators, who facilitate the interactions of learners, negotiate meaning, and build fluency in the process of using the target language in real-life situations, is the argument offered by the author. This strategy is an opposite of grammar-translation style when the teacher is leading the classroom discussion, and the students tend to be passive receivers of information.

CLT is especially relevant to the situation in Nigeria, where French is a second language, and all instruction is conducted in the classroom. Teachers can develop confidence and competence by involving students in role-plays, dialogues, debates, and problem solving activities in the French language. The studies carried in Nigeria show that the students who have been introduced to CLT-based instruction have a higher level of oral proficiency and are more motivated to continue learning French. According to Mbaha and Ajibola (2020), the use of CLT techniques was effective in developing communicative competence than classes relying on translation and memorisation only.

Notably, CLT strengthens the fact that teachers are the major actors in the realisation of French language agenda. The strategy means that the teachers should design interactive lessons, keep track of the learner involvement and give valuable feedback. CLT cannot achieve success without the dedication and creativity of the teacher. Moreover, in low-resource settings, instructors have to be inventive with the principles of CLT, by making use of inexpensive technology or local resources to replicate the communicative conditions. This again underscores the fact that teacher agency is an essential component in ensuring that pedagogical practice is aligned to policy goals.

Sociocultural Theory

Another useful theoretical approach to the role of teacher in French language education can be sociocultural theory that was developed by Lev Vygotsky. According to the theory, the mediated social interaction suggests that learning takes place when learners interact with the cultural tools, language, and other people who are knowledgeable. At the centre of this theory lies the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) that defines what a learner is capable of accomplishing without the support or guidance of a more knowledgeable individual (Lantolf and Thorne, 2020). At the classroom level, teachers serve as mediators who scaffold the development of the learners by organizing activities, giving feedback on matters and gradually handing over the responsibility as the competence level improves.

When applied to the field of French education in Nigeria, socio cultural theory highlights the fact that not only do teachers impart linguistic forms, but also they mediate cultural knowledge. Providing learners with the introduction to the Francophone traditions, values and worldviews, the teachers can place the language learning into the broader context of an interculturalisation. This is much in line with the twofold political and cultural goals of the French language agenda, which is not only aimed at raising the number of the French speaking population, but also promoting stronger cultural and diplomatic relationships between the Anglophone and the Francophone states.

The significance of interaction and collaboration is also emphasized by the sociocultural theory. When teachers promote peer learning, dialogue and collaborative learning activities, students will co-construct sense and exercise language in socially significant respects. In this respect, teachers can be viewed as both as the mediators of communication and cultural brokers, which strengthens the notion that the language education process cannot be viewed outside of the context of the general processes of identity formation and intercultural communication.

A combination of these three frameworks, namely, the LPP theory, CLT, and the sociocultural theory supports the position that teachers play the central role in the realisation of the French language agenda. LPP theory places teachers in the role of the first-line implementers of the acquisition planning as it shows that policy statements alone are useless without the classroom-based implementation. The CLT offers a pedagogical model that enables teachers to develop communicative competence that demonstrates how a change in the teaching methods can change the performance of learners. The sociocultural theory enlarges the role of the teacher making it more important/pertinent with respect to their role as cultural mediators who will not only lead the learners to linguistic competence but also intercultural competence.

Empirical research throughout Africa affirms that there is no other factor that impacts the learner outcomes compared to teacher practices. In the case where the teachers are well trained, motivated and resourceful, the learners become proficient and develop positive attitudes towards the French language. The agenda fails where teachers are ill equipped or unassisted. Still, there are some unresolved issues: poor training, insufficient resources, and poor policy-practice congruency. It is imperative to deal with these concerns when planning to transform the French language agenda into a reality. Finally, the theories come to the same conclusion: the teacher is not a peripheral player, but the key to language planning, pedagogy, and intercultural exchange.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative design of the study is exploratory in nature as the issue of interest, which is the role of teachers in the realisation of the French language agenda, can only be explained by interpreting it and not through quantitative data. Exploratory research is particularly suitable in the situations when meanings, practices, and lived experiences are of interest, and statistical correlations do not demand attention (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Teachers sit on the nexus of policy and practice where their practices are influenced by sociocultural, institutional, and political forces. There is a need to capture these dynamics using qualitative methods which can be interpreted in a depth, nuanced context.

Given (2019) observed that the qualitative research design is adequate in conducting a language policy study since it considers how actors perceive and put policies into practice. This matters because teachers are not passive intermediaries but proactive actors that are charged with the responsibility of bridging policy texts and realities in the classroom. The qualitative nature of the study is thus able to explore the perceptions, practices and problems of the teachers in the promotion of the French language agenda in greater detail.

3.2 Data Sources

In this study, the main sources of research focus on secondary data, which is supplemented by documentary evidence in institutional publications and reports. Dependence on secondary sources is premeditated, since the research is focused on synthesising on the issues of existing arguments, evidence and opinions regarding French language training in Africa, but not generating new empirical information, which could be achieved by use of surveys or interviews. The documentary study of academic literature, policy frameworks, and reports provides a solid source of research on the role that teachers play in facilitating or limiting the actualisation of the French language agenda. The choice of sources was made in two major considerations. Recency was the first one, and only the materials published between 2019 and 2025 were prioritized. This allowed keeping the findings up to date with the most topical issues and developments in the field of French pedagogy, and also the policy trends over the past five years. The second one was relevancy, and the primary sources to be used were those that explicitly covered the policy of the French language and the process of teaching it in African environments, and in Nigeria specifically. With a balanced body of evidence incorporated by

incorporating the views of scholarship, policy, and international institutions, the study is able to display both theoretical debates and realities of educational life.

3.2.1 Scholarly Articles

The main bulk of empirical data is constituted by peer-reviewed journal articles. They are particularly crucial, as they introduce findings of systematically conducted studies, which have undergone the process of academic review. Among the most topical ones, one may mention the works by Adedeji and Salami (2022), who examined the mediation effect of the Nigerian French teachers between the country-level policies of gender equality and the realities in the classroom. Their research points at the degree to which educators make changes in their curriculum due to budget constraints. A study by Aka (2023) investigated the implementation of the information and communication technologies (ICT) in French pedagogy, and revealed that the digital tools are capable of encouraging the interest in learners, but are frequently restricted by the infrastructural factors. Another study is as important as Ndille (2021) who examined the larger cultural and pedagogical barriers to French education in Francophone Africa. Together, these articles demonstrate how complicated teacher practices are and how they decisively shape the outcomes of the policies.

3.2.2 Policy Documents

The study also ventured widely into policy documents which define the formal goals of the policy and outline the role of teachers as the major implementers of the French language agenda. The national policy on education in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019) holds central significance because it determines the position of French in the national curriculum and predetermines the standards of teacher training. Moreover, the African Union resolutions concerning bilingualism and multilingual education were also consulted in order to reflect the continental dreams of ensuring cohesion between the Anglophone and Francophone member states. These reports are priceless since they demonstrate what the authorities promise to do to promote French and explain how educators are supposed to put policy into practice in classrooms.

3.2.3 International Reports

Reports that were created by international organisations gave the data a global and comparative aspect. Reports on language education and equity provided by UNESCO provide an idea of the international standards and practices, and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF, 2022) offers a frequent evaluation of the distribution and health of the French language. These reports include both statistical information (enrolment data and demographics), and qualitative remarks upon challenges and opportunities to promote French in non-Francophone environments. Placing the policies of Nigeria in this broader perspective enabled the research to determine how much national policies have been developed in tandem with the world-wide Francophone strategies or that there are gaps that hamper the proper execution of the strategies.

3.2.4 Supplementary Literature

Lastly, the paper has used additional literature resources such as books and edited volumes which give theoretical background. Ricento (2020) presents a modern argumentation surrounding the language policy and planning theory, which focuses on the significance of teacher agency in the planning of acquisition. Larsen-Freeman (2020) describes communicative language teaching as a paradigm of pedagogy that is opposite to grammar-translation practices. The works allow relating the results of empirical data to larger theoretical bases including sociocultural theory and language planning models. Reading such literature guaranteed that the research did not just outline the existing practices but also explained them in the pre-existing conceptual perspectives. The study uses a multi-layered evidence base by relying on scholarly articles, policy reports, international reports, and theoretical literature. Such a variety of resources gives the research depth and breadth, enabling us to examine the topic to analyze the policy discourses in a sensitive manner, with empirical evidence and informed by theoretical knowledge.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The primary method of data collection adopted for this research was **documentary analysis**. Documentary analysis refers to the systematic procedure of reviewing and interpreting documents to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. Bowen (2009) describes it as an especially appropriate method when the research problem is strongly shaped by policy discourses,

institutional reports, and previously published studies. Given that the French language agenda in Nigeria is largely defined by official pronouncements, educational frameworks, and scholarly analyses of classroom practice, documentary analysis provided the most suitable approach for gathering relevant information. Instead of focusing on the collection of new primary data through surveys or interviews, the study concentrated on critically synthesising existing documents to build a comprehensive account of how teachers contribute to, or constrain, the implementation of the French language agenda.

The use of documentary analysis was further justified by the study's reliance on **secondary data sources**. As the research sought to capture debates and practices between 2019 and 2025, much of the relevant evidence already exists in peer-reviewed journal articles, government policy documents, and international reports. This made it possible to assemble a dataset that is both contemporary and diverse, reflecting empirical, policy, and theoretical dimensions. Moreover, documentary analysis is particularly effective in comparative contexts, as it allows the researcher to juxtapose Nigeria's efforts with broader regional or global trends by drawing on documents from international organisations such as UNESCO and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

The process of documentary analysis unfolded in **three main steps: selection, organisation, and extraction**. The first step, selection, involved choosing documents based on their **relevance, credibility, and recency**. Relevance was determined by whether a document directly addressed French language education, teacher roles, or language policy implementation in African contexts. Credibility was established by privileging peer-reviewed journal articles, official publications from national governments or recognised organisations, and books authored by leading scholars in language policy and pedagogy. Recency was ensured by restricting the dataset to works published between 2019 and 2025. This criterion was vital for ensuring that the analysis reflected contemporary developments rather than outdated practices.

The second step, organisation, entailed categorising documents into thematic groups. Three broad categories were identified: **policy frameworks, empirical studies, and theoretical discussions**. Policy frameworks included national education policies and regional agreements such as those issued by the African Union. Empirical studies were comprised of journal articles reporting field-based research on teacher practices, pedagogical innovations, or classroom challenges. Theoretical discussions encompassed books and conceptual works that offered interpretive frameworks, such as Ricento (2020) on language policy and Larsen-Freeman (2020) on communicative approaches. This organisation facilitated systematic cross-comparison across different types of documents, enabling the study to integrate high-level policy goals with ground-level classroom realities.

The third step, extraction, involved systematically reviewing the content of each document to identify relevant information about teachers' roles, challenges, and contributions. Extracted data were coded into categories such as "teachers as policy mediators," "pedagogical innovation," "resource constraints," and "cultural ambassadorship." This step ensured that the analysis remained focused on the research objectives while capturing the diversity of perspectives represented in the documents. By coding and categorising information, the study was able to generate a dataset suitable for thematic analysis, which served as the primary analytical tool.

It is important to acknowledge that the study did not employ **primary data collection methods** such as classroom observations, structured interviews, or surveys. This decision was influenced by both practical constraints of scope and the methodological focus of the research. While primary engagement with teachers could have yielded rich, first-hand insights into classroom dynamics, the study prioritised synthesising the wealth of secondary data already available. Nonetheless, the research recognises the potential for future studies to build upon its findings by incorporating direct interaction with teachers. Such studies could employ mixed methods approaches, combining documentary analysis with interviews or focus groups, to capture both the documented and lived experiences of teachers in implementing the French language agenda.

3.4 Analytical Tools

Thematic content analysis was the tool that was used to conduct the study. Thematic analysis is a popular approach to the qualitative research to recognise, examine, and present common patterns in data (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Its advantage is in its flexibility and its capacity to generalise findings of varied sources into consistent themes. In a study that involved the compilation of journal articles, policy

documents, and reports, thematic analysis was quite effective since it was possible to combine the empirical, theoretical, and policy-related evidence into one interpretive framework.

The thematic analysis had to deal with a number of steps. To begin with, familiarisation was brought about by reading through the chosen documents several times to get a comprehensive knowledge about the contents. This step helped the researcher to understand the main points of both sources and to find general concepts of coding. Second, coding was done, and according to which, certain labels were assigned to the selected passages of texts which represented certain ideas. Some of the examples of codes are to be found in terms of teachers as policy mediators, innovative use of ICT, limited resources, and policy-practice gaps. Third, the theme generation was done through grouping of related codes into wider themes. As an example, such codes like the lack of training and the inability to experience the French culture were united within the theme of the limitation of teacher capacity. Likewise, the codes concerning the cultural integration and the process of motivating learners were combined into the theme of the cultural ambassadors of teachers. Lastly, a review and refinement phase was conducted to determine the coherence of themes in multiple sources to make sure there was consistency and credibility.

This process of iterating gave birth to a couple of major themes such as agency of teachers, communicative competence, pedagogical innovation, cultural ambassadorship and structural issues. These themes were the basis of the analysis in the results and discussion chapters. Thematic analysis therefore facilitated the study to transcend description to interpretation in showing how the role of teachers can support and limit French language agenda.

The researcher has demonstrated credibility and reliability of the findings because the study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data and methodologies.

3.5 Trustworthiness and Validity

The researcher has illustrated credibility and reliability of the research as both qualitative and quantitative data and methods were incorporated in the study.

This research was a qualitative study, which did not depend on conventional statistical parameters that determine a validity. Rather, it developed credibility using the criteria mentioned by Lincoln and Guba (1985), i.e., credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Triangulation of data sources was a way of increasing credibility. The use of journal articles, policy documents, and international reports to compile the study has allowed the research to avoid relying on one type of evidence but have presented converging views. The issue of dependability was achieved through the use of a clear and systematic research process, where every step of document selection, coding, and thematic analysis was defined and followed throughout. The grounding of interpretations on direct evidence contained in documents ensured that it was confirmable without speculation or dependence on the opinion of the researcher. All analytical assertions were related to a particular textual evidence in literature reviewed. Lastly, the aspect of transferability was enhanced through the availability of rich contextual accounts of the French language agenda in Nigeria, the regional and global connections. Such descriptions enable readers and those who might research later to determine the relevance of the findings to other related situations e.g. other Anglophone African states involved in the promotion of the French.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Even though this paper was purely based on the publicly available materials only, academic sources, and institutional publications, the issues of ethics were at the center of the research process. The lack of direct contact with human subjects minimized the risks of privacy, confidentiality, or informed consent. However, when using secondary data, special care should have been taken regarding the concerns of integrity, fairness, and intellectual responsibility.

The most important ethical issue was the correct transfer of ideas. Every source was identified properly, responding to the APA 7th edition reference style, which contributed to the transparency of using the works of other scholars and prevented plagiarism of any kind. The practice not only preserved the intellectual work of writers but it also enabled readers to access evidence by going to original sources. Moreover, the study was careful when interpreting documents, so as to not misrepresent or cherry pick. By doing this, the study promoted academic integrity and ensured the credibility required of academic investigation.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Teachers as Policy Interpreters and Mediators

The findings of this study confirm that teachers are the essential link between national language policies and actual classroom practice. Policies such as Nigeria's *National Policy on Education* (2019) mandate the teaching of French at secondary level, but it is teachers who interpret these directives in practical terms. Teachers must decide what aspects of the curriculum to prioritise, how to sequence lessons, and how to adapt objectives to local conditions.

Adedeji and Salami (2022) observed that Nigerian French teachers often diverge from official communicative-oriented curricula by reverting to grammar-translation methods. This shift is not necessarily a rejection of policy but a pragmatic adaptation to limited resources, such as the absence of audio-visual equipment or opportunities for oral practice. The implication is that policies alone cannot guarantee communicative competence; the teacher's interpretive choices determine whether policy intentions are realised.

Shohamy's (2019) argument that teachers function as "street-level bureaucrats" resonates here. Teachers selectively enforce or adapt policies, sometimes even resisting aspects that they deem unrealistic. For instance, when curricula demand role-plays and dialogues in French, but students lack exposure to authentic speech, teachers may default to English explanations and rote vocabulary drills. Such practices demonstrate the tension between policy ideals and classroom realities.

This role as mediator underscores both the agency and the burden placed on teachers. On one hand, their interpretive freedom allows them to contextualise learning. On the other hand, it exposes them to blame when outcomes fall short of policy expectations.

4.2 Teachers as Models of Proficiency and Communicative Competence

In non-Francophone contexts such as Nigeria, teachers are often the only consistent source of authentic French input. Students rarely encounter French outside school, making teachers' proficiency levels central to learners' acquisition. Ndille (2021) highlights that learners' attitudes towards French are directly shaped by the teacher's command of the language. Where teachers display confidence, fluency, and enthusiasm, students are more likely to view French as achievable and valuable. Conversely, when teachers demonstrate limited oral proficiency, students internalise French as a difficult or impractical subject.

Empirical evidence suggests that many Nigerian French teachers face proficiency gaps. Ogunmodede and Akinwale (2021) reported that a significant proportion of teachers relied heavily on textbooks, avoided spontaneous conversation in French, and conducted explanations predominantly in English. These practices undermine communicative competence and reduce learner exposure to authentic language use.

This finding connects to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) framework, which positions teachers as facilitators of interaction rather than mere transmitters of grammatical knowledge (Larsen-Freeman, 2020). If teachers themselves are unable to sustain conversation in French, their ability to model communicative practices is compromised. Thus, strengthening teacher proficiency through immersion programmes, professional development, and exchange opportunities is critical to the realisation of the French language agenda.

4.3 Teachers as Innovators in Pedagogy and ICT Integration

Another key finding is that teachers are not merely constrained actors but also innovators who experiment with pedagogical strategies to make French engaging. Aka (2023) documented cases where teachers integrated ICT tools such as YouTube videos, language learning apps, and online pen-pal exchanges into classroom practice. Students exposed to these methods demonstrated higher motivation and oral competence compared to those taught with traditional methods.

However, innovation is uneven. Many schools lack the infrastructure for ICT-based instruction. Where internet connectivity is poor, or classrooms lack projectors, teachers revert to chalk-and-talk pedagogy. Mbah and Ajibola (2020) found that even when teachers are trained in communicative approaches, implementation falters without institutional support.

The results therefore indicate that while teachers have the potential to be innovators, their capacity is heavily dependent on systemic investment in infrastructure and resources. Innovation in pedagogy cannot be divorced from material realities. This reinforces sociocultural theory's emphasis that teaching

practices are mediated by tools and contexts (Lantolf & Thorne, 2020). Teachers innovate not in isolation but within ecosystems shaped by policies, institutions, and technology.

4.4 Teachers as Motivators of Learner Attitudes

The discussion also highlights the motivational role teachers play. Learner persistence in French often hinges less on policy mandates and more on the teacher's ability to make the subject relevant and enjoyable. Okeke (2020) found that when teachers incorporated Francophone music, films, or cultural discussions into lessons, students expressed greater enthusiasm and a willingness to continue studying French. Conversely, when lessons were reduced to grammar drills and vocabulary lists, students perceived French as irrelevant.

This finding is critical because societal perceptions of French in Nigeria are often ambivalent. While policymakers view it as strategically important, many parents and students consider it less valuable than English or indigenous languages in the labour market (Ogunmodede & Akinwale, 2021). Teachers therefore function as counter-discursive agents, reshaping learner perceptions by presenting French as a gateway to culture, diplomacy, and career opportunities.

Motivational influence also aligns with sociocultural theory, which views learning as socially mediated. Teachers scaffold not just knowledge but also learner identities, encouraging students to see themselves as potential French speakers. By cultivating this identity, teachers contribute to the sustainability of the French language agenda beyond the classroom.

4.5 Teachers as Cultural Ambassadors

Beyond pedagogy, teachers are cultural ambassadors who introduce students to Francophone civilisations. The French language agenda is not limited to grammar; it embodies cultural diplomacy and intercultural understanding. Teachers facilitate this by embedding cultural artefacts—literature, history, customs—into lessons.

Ndille (2021) notes that African teachers of French often present cultural knowledge selectively, balancing between promoting Francophone culture and maintaining local identities. This dual role requires sensitivity. Overemphasis on French culture risks alienating students, while ignoring it reduces French to a sterile subject. Successful teachers navigate this by creating intercultural dialogues that affirm both French and Nigerian identities.

This ambassadorial role demonstrates the political dimension of teaching French. Teachers enact Nigeria's diplomatic aspirations by cultivating students who can engage with Francophone societies. Thus, teachers are not merely educators but also participants in broader geopolitical agendas.

4.6 Challenges Confronting Teachers

4.6.1 Inadequate Training and Professional Growth

Another problem that keeps on replicating is the lack of training opportunities among the French teachers. According to Adedeji and Salami (2022), a significant number of teachers in Nigeria did not take part in immersion programmes in the French speaking countries. Their fluency does not progress without constant exposure. Moreover, the teacher education programs are normally focused on theory of linguistics and are not equipped with the practical aspects of communication because they do not prepare graduates to face realities of the classroom.

4.6.2 Inadequate Resources

There is shortage of resources. Several schools do not have French textbooks, audio materials, or language labs (Ndille, 2021). The teachers thus use old materials improvised or make their own materials, which might not be in tandem with current communicative methods. The goals of agenda are not real without sufficient resources.

4.6.3 Policy-Practice Gaps

The grandiose policy statements tend to lack financial allocation and institutionalization. Tchatchoua (2021) noted in Cameroon that the bilingualism policies were established, whereas the schools did not have the infrastructure to implement it. The same situation is reflected on the Nigerian case: in spite of the fact that French is proclaimed as the second official language in 1998, the funding of teachers training and providing the resources is still insufficient.

4.6.4 Low Learner Motivation

The societal perceptions also pose a challenge of low learner motivation by the teachers. Fr French is considered an imposing course by many students which has little career value. Such perception

weakens the work of teachers who have to use a lot of energy to convince students of the importance of French (Okeke, 2020).

The policy and practice implications of this study are as follows:

The implications of the findings are huge in the realisation of French language agenda.

Development of Teachers should be of primary concern: The policies should be more focused on teacher training, such as immersion programmes and continuous professional development. In the absence of effective educators, the policy objectives are far-fetched.

Investment in Resources Is a Must: Teachers cannot establish communicative pedagogy in their absence of the resources. There is need to invest in textbooks, digital tools and language laboratories.

Fueling Pedagogical Innovation: Teachers need institutional support to explore ICT and intercultural pedagogy. Technology- embrace pilot projects need to be expanded at a national scale.

Targeting the Societies: Teachers do not have the power to change the attitude towards French. Campaigns advertising career and diplomatic opportunities related to French may also be used to enhance classroom activities.

Policy-Practice Alignment: Governments should be careful to see to it that proclamations of French as a national priority are accompanied with subsistence. This necessitates budgetary allocations and monitoring in addition to accountability.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

This paper has analyzed the importance of the teacher in the actualization of the French language agenda with Nigeria as the case study but putting the discussion within the background of Africa and the global context. The discussion showed that the teachers are placed at the centre of the position in fulfilling the gap between policy aspirations and classroom realities. The national and international systems, including the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2019) and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF, 2022), include progressive descriptions of the visions of advancing the French language as a diplomatic and integration tool and a means of intercultural communication. The achievement of these goals, however, lies in the agency, the proficiency, and practices of teachers.

It was discovered that teachers play many roles: they decipher and mediate policies, exemplify communicative competence, establish pedagogical novelty, stimulate learners, and become cultural ambassadors. The importance of these roles is that the students in non-Francophone situations are practically dependent on the teachers to get to know the French language and the Francophone cultures. The presence of competent, motivated and resourceful teachers will help the students grow into positive attitudes and acquire meaningful proficiency. On the other hand, the agenda collapses when teachers are exposed to some problems like inadequate training, inadequate resources, and the society failing to appreciate the importance of learning about French.

These dynamics are stressed by empirical studies. The research conducted by Adedeji and Salami (2022) revealed that Nigerian educators tend to implement policies in a pragmatic direction and sometimes do not follow the communicative strategies because of resource shortage. Ndille (2021) has pointed out the role of teacher proficiency in the motivation of learners, whereas Aka (2023) has shown how ICT integration can be used to rejuvenate the classroom activities. All these findings paint a clear picture of how the teacher is the linchpin and the bottleneck of the French language agenda.

Systemic challenges that hamper the effectiveness of the teachers were also found in the study. These are lack of proper professional development, disconnect between the policy and practice, limited resources and poor perception of French by the society as compared to English. These difficulties indicate that it is not only a matter of an individual teacher, but the system itself needs to be invested in and the policies pulled into coherence.

5.2 Reflective Insights

The findings can be further expanded to ideas about what language policy implementation is like. Policies are usually formulated with great ambitions like when Nigeria resolved to adopt French as a second official language but unless there is long term investment on teacher training, provision of resources and institutional guidance, then such ambitions will only stay as ambitions but not as transformations. This observation is consistent with the argument by Ricento (2020), who states that policies can only be effective as the practices by the individuals who are to apply them.

Educators cannot therefore be used as a policy neutral tool. They are dynamic actors who read, adapt and even defy official instructions. Their agency is not a problem but rather an opportunity: by enabling teachers in terms of training, resources, professional networks, policymakers can use their interpretive role to reinstate the French language agenda.

The other reflection is the cultural aspect of the teaching French. The role of teachers is not only that of instructors of language but cultural representatives between local and global identities. This is a very sensitive yet important role in maintaining the interest of learners. In case French is introduced as a technical course only, learners will lose interest. Learners find it valuable when it is posed as a point of cultural experiences and overseas opportunities. The effectiveness of teachers in this position is determined by their cultural literacy and capacity to introduce their pedagogy with authentic materials, including Francophone literature, music, and film (Okeke, 2020).

More so, teacher motivation plays a crucial role especially in situations where there is a lukewarm attitude towards the French in the society. The teachers have the responsibility of convincing students and parents about the relevancy of the topic. The intersection of pedagogy and advocacy is supported by this motivational role: teachers do not only teach the language but also promote the language agenda.

5.3 Implications on Policy and Practice

The implications of the findings are a number of policy and practice implications. To begin with, the development of teachers should be of priority. It is necessary, the continuous professional development, immersion programmes in the countries where the French is spoken, and linguistic and cultural upgrading opportunities. In the absence of good teachers, other curriculum or resource investments will not give high returns.

Second, the supply of resources has to be improved. The policies must also make sure that modern text books, audio-visual facilities and digital facilities to learn the language are provided in schools. Lack of the basic tools of communicative pedagogy cannot allow teachers to be innovative.

Third, the societal perceptions would have to be taken care of. Policymakers and educators ought to work together to bring about the economic and diplomatic importance of French. Awareness campaigns, scholarships and exchange programmes may raise the status of French and make the students more motivated.

Fourth, there is need to have policy-practice alignment. Governments ought to make sure that the statements of French as their priority are accompanied by budgetary allocations, monitoring and accountability. In order to close the gap between classroom realities and decisions made, teachers have to be involved in policy formulation processes.

Lastly, professional networks are to be developed. Peer support, resources and a feeling of belonging to a bigger agenda can be given to teachers through teacher associations, cross-border collaboration and Francophone-Anglophone exchange platforms.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

The research was based mainly on the analysis of documentaries. Although this method offered useful information about the role and problems of teachers, primary data collection might be helpful in future research. Richer empirical evidence would be made available through in-depth interviews with teachers, classroom observations, and survey of the learners. The ways in which the French language agenda is realised in various contexts by examining the Anglophone and Francophone states in Africa may also be seen through conducting comparative studies.

Technology is another field to be researched on. The COVID-19 pandemic fastened the use of online learning tools, which can provide new opportunities in teaching the French language in the situation of limited resources. The research on the incorporation of ICT in pedagogy by teachers might be informative in scaling digital innovations.

Lastly, longitudinal research of the proficiency and attitudes of students across time may help identify the way that the practice of teachers is converted into long-term language learning and cultural participation. Such research would offer solid grounds on which teacher roles can be assessed in the long-term effect to the French language agenda.

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